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POLICY REVIEW

GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS: A POLICY REVIEW

SUMMARY

At its 1993 session, the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to prepare a report on UNICEF policy on the advancement of women and girls in the context of the growing global recognition of gender concerns as a major element in social and economic development. The Board also requested that the report include the UNICEF contribution to the preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held at Beijing in September 1995.

Chapter I of the present report provides an overview of the key policy developments with regard to women and the girl child. Chapter II focuses on the synergism and the critical links between promoting gender equality and achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. It argues for action, emphasizing the complementary and supportive relationships between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Chapter III presents a review of UNICEF programmes for women and girls, discusses the findings of the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, as summarized in E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7, and analyses progress made. Chapter IV outlines the priorities for action in the 1990s. It analyses the need for strengthened actions for women and girls, including mainstreaming of gender concerns, initiatives for the girl child and activities targeted at specific groups of women. It also describes the growing emphasis on achieving gender equity within the family and mobilizing youth to overcome structural gender inequalities.

Chapter V considers the organizational factors of responsibility, accountability and coordination for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, while chapter VI outlines the UNICEF contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The evolution of the UNICEF policy on women reflects the increasing awareness of the contributions of women to economic and social development and the need to strengthen the relationship between programmes for women and the strategies for the achievement of the child survival and development (CSD) goals. In the early years of UNICEF, basic health and social services programmes emphasized the role of women as mothers, child caretakers and home-makers and promoted the education of women and girls. Since the mid-1960s, it has become increasingly evident that improving the status of women is an essential part of social development. This awareness led UNICEF to adopt an expanded definition of the role of women, one that recognized not only their nurturing and reproductive functions, but also their needs and responsibilities in the economic and nutritional welfare of their families and as community leaders. The UNICEF basic services strategy in the 1970s promoted health and education of women and girls, provided training and support for the economic activities of women and encouraged their participation in the community management of services.

2. The policy on women in development approved by the Executive Board in 1985 (E/ICEF/1985/L.1) recognized that women should be the focus of attention in UNICEF cooperation with Governments (E/ICEF/1985/12, paras. 90-94). That policy was the logical extension of the previous policy, approved by the Board in 1980 (E/ICEF/L.1409), which advocated a broad perception of the roles played by women in society and in the development process (E/ICEF/673, para. 149). The implementation strategy approved by the Executive Board in 1987 (E/ICEF/1987/L.1) proposed a comprehensive approach to incorporating the needs and concerns of women as a specific target for programme action (E/ICEF/1987/11, decision 1987/18). It recommended that UNICEF strengthen, within the framework of its regular country programme strategy, activities that improve the education and health of women and promote their social and economic empowerment, both in their own right and as the key to CSD. The recognition of the strong relationship between the social and economic position of women and the well-being of children resulted in increased attention to women's literacy, access to credit, economic activities, labour-saving devices and mobilization and organization to encourage participation in decision-making in their communities.

3. The goals and strategies for children in the 1990s, approved by the Executive Board in 1991 (E/ICEF/1991/15, decision 1991/10), contain many specific references to girls and women. Both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, adopted at the World Summit for Children, which form the basis for the goals for the 1990s, put a major emphasis on equal opportunities for girls. In promoting the universal rights of children and in placing children first on the human development agenda, the World Summit for Children, in September 1990, singled out the situation of the girl child and called for support for her development. The World Declaration emphasizes the importance of strengthening the role of women in general and of ensuring their equal rights. It states, "Girls must be given equal treatment and opportunities from the very beginning".

4. The focus on the girl child and on the pattern of neglect that impedes her normal growth and development at different stages of life led to the adoption of a "life cycle" framework for analysis and action. It identifies the context and conditions of persistent discrimination against girls and women and stresses that specific action should be formulated at each stage of life to eliminate gender-based disadvantages. In decision 1990/17 (E/ICEF/1990/13), the Executive Board called on UNICEF to address the status of the girl child and her needs, particularly in health, nutrition and education, and to give the girl child every opportunity to gain equal status and treatment in order to grow and develop to her full potential.

5. The UNICEF medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995, approved by the Executive Board in 1992 (E/ICEF/1992/3), identified the status of women and girls and their participation in development and empowerment as a central focus of UNICEF cooperation (E/ICEF/1992/14, decision 1992/12). It pointed out that the empowerment of women is a crucial factor in social justice, equity and development and in the fulfilment of the commitment made by Governments in the Declaration of the World Summit for Children.

6. UNICEF policies have been guided by a growing understanding of gender-based discrimination and of the needs of the girl child. This is evident in programme areas where the concern for girls and women converges with CSD, namely in maternal and child health care, nutrition, education, income generation and water supply and sanitation, as reviewed briefly in chapter III of the present report. The specific provisions in the Convention on the Rights of the Child for gender equality and improving the situation of the girl child establish an important link with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and women's rights.

7. At its 1993 session, the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to prepare a report on UNICEF policy on the advancement of women and girls in the context of the growing global recognition of gender concerns in social and economic development. It also requested that the report include the UNICEF contribution to the preparatory activities of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held at Beijing in 1995.

8. The present report, responding to the request of the Executive Board, gives a brief review of the efforts of UNICEF to implement its policies and strategies on girls and women and highlights priorities in advocacy and programme actions for the equality and empowerment of girls and women in the 1990s. It also indicates measures for strengthening accountability and responsibility for policy implementation at headquarters and in field offices and outlines the UNICEF contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

II. GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND GENDER EQUALITY

9. The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets forth universal standards for the creation of a positive environment for all children. Article 2 demands that discrimination among children be eliminated. The World Summit for Children and Executive Board decisions 1990/10 and 1990/17 similarly highlight the need for reducing disparities between boys and girls and urge that girls should

receive priority attention in national programmes of action. The universal goals set by the World Summit, and adopted in the national programmes of action, cannot be achieved unless girls are targeted equitably in programmes on child survival, development and protection. Not only does the setting of gender-sensitive targets become critical in the achievement of goals for children, it also provides unique opportunities to reverse the discrimination faced by girls in all stages of life. It establishes the need to gather gender-disaggregated data on all facets of childhood development. For example, the achievement of the goal of universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary-school-age children by the year 2000 requires that equal opportunities be provided to both girls and boys for school enrolment, reversing past and current neglect of girls, and that gender-sensitive monitoring of school attendance and performance be undertaken.

10. Twelve of the goals of the World Summit relate explicitly to the special needs of girls and women (see annex I). They include halving the maternal mortality rate, doubling the adult literacy rate, achieving equal educational opportunities for boys and girls and recognizing the special health and nutrition needs of females during early childhood, adolescence, pregnancy and lactation. The emphasis placed on the empowerment of women and their participation in planning and implementing the strategies to achieve the goals for children recognizes that reaching the goals is contingent upon the improvement of the status of women. The social and economic situation of women as de facto managers of households, income earners, caregivers of family health and nutrition and as mothers profoundly affects efforts to reduce infant and child deaths and child malnutrition. This synergistic relationship is reflected in a comprehensive approach that incorporates the needs and concerns of women in the overall development process and promotes their equality and empowerment.

11. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women further safeguards the interests of the girl child and ensures her legal status and social development, especially in conjunction with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Several articles of both Conventions contain the principles of equitable health care, abolition of traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children and protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. The goals of the World Summit for Children complement those of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. All of these initiatives provide a broad conceptual and ethical foundation for action to promote the equality and empowerment of girls and women.

III. REVIEW OF UNICEF PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

12. UNICEF has used three major operational approaches to implement its policies and strategies regarding girls and women: "mainstreaming" gender concerns; promoting gender-specific programme activities targeted at girls and women; and giving special attention to the girl child. Generally, the three approaches have overlapped country programmes, contributing to the overall objectives of eliminating gender discrimination and improving the status of women.

A. Mainstreaming

13. The policy and operational strategy for women in development call for the integration of the needs and concerns of women into the mainstream of UNICEF programmes of cooperation, with an emphasis on the multidimensional roles and responsibilities of women. The strategy emphasizes that programmes in all major sectors should respond directly to the needs and concerns of women within the framework of human and social development objectives and programmes. This development approach is in contrast to welfare measures to alleviate specific situations of disadvantage or deprivation suffered by women. The policy, however, does not exclude specific programmes and projects for women, where circumstances make it necessary, as a means of enabling women to participate in mainstream social and economic development. In practice, mainstreaming often has called for supporting gender-specific activities as well as highlighting the situation of and advocacy for the girl child.

B. Women-centred activities

14. With mainstreaming as a general strategic framework, UNICEF has supported a wide range of programme activities for the advancement of women and girls through advocacy, policy-oriented research and technical cooperation. There have been many successful examples in the sectors of health, education, income generation and water supply and sanitation of addressing the needs of women and girls and of promoting their participation in community development. For instance, income-generating activities aimed specifically at women in poverty, and including actions for improving the access of women to credit and productive resources, have been included in area-based programmes in both rural areas and urban slums in Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia and Nepal. Such activities have enhanced the social and economic status of women. In some instances, those projects also provided the opportunity for women to organize and participate in the planning and management of the activities. However, the relatively small number of direct beneficiaries in many projects has meant that the impact on the overall social and economic situation of women and children generally has been modest.

15. Some successes have been achieved in integrating women's concerns in national development policies and country programmes of cooperation, in particular in Ethiopia, Namibia and Pakistan. UNICEF actions for effecting change in the overall situation and status of women have been directed mainly at advocacy and support of the national preparatory process of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the establishment of national programmes in over 40 countries, including Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Cape Verde, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

C. Initiatives for the girl child

16. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and related policy thrusts stimulated regional and country-level actions for advocacy and mobilization in favour of girls in the survival and development of children and the elimination of social and cultural discriminatory practices. Social mobilization has

focused on changing social attitudes, particularly those related to the preference for sons in most countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. In more than 50 countries, the systematic collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data on demographic and social indicators of health, education and nutrition at national, regional and subnational levels have helped to identify problem areas, such as adverse health and nutritional status of the girl child and factors inhibiting the enrolment and retention of girls in school. The analysis of disaggregated data has stimulated the development of specific programmes targeted at disadvantaged girls and women in Bangladesh, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, Turkey and other countries. In the area of exploitation of girls in exceptionally difficult circumstances, especially the working girl child and commercial sex workers, initiatives by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have generated support for fundamental changes in social attitudes and practices. The efforts in Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and the Sudan, among others, for the eradication of such harmful traditional practices as female genital mutilation and early marriage have drawn attention to the need for legislation and social sanctions banning such practices. However, it is clear that deep-rooted attitudes and values change very slowly, and determined and patient efforts to bring about change must be made.

17. The progress achieved in policy dialogue and advocacy for the girl child has resulted in the adoption of actions and targets of the mid-decade goals and the goals for the year 2000. For instance, in order to achieve universal access to primary education, and completion by at least 80 per cent of primary-school-age children, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and other countries with wide gender disparities in education have adopted specific measures for the education of girls. The measures include special schools, appointment of female teachers, incentives for families, social mobilization for changing attitudes and provision of day-care services to release girls from the responsibility of child care. Similarly, gender-sensitive monitoring of nutritional status among children has resulted in special information and communication campaigns promoting action at the household level against discriminatory nutritional practices. The reduction in infant mortality among boys and girls also requires gender-sensitive monitoring and specific actions directed at such causal factors as the low level of education of women, early marriage of girls and incidence of teenage pregnancy. The recent global consultation on the girl child, held in India in February 1994, deliberated those and other critical issues and recommended strategies for integrated programme actions as appropriate to the country situation.

D. Overall assessment

18. The multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, as summarized in E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7, in its review of the implementation of the 1987 policy and the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995, reports that "UNICEF has worked to refine its understanding of these objectives and to implement the policy in its entirety", and that "efforts have been made to link advocacy for children with the struggle for the empowerment of women". 1/ It also points out the difficulties faced in translating goals for mainstreaming and integration into visible objectives and actions in country programmes. It recommends that concerted efforts be made to

address the gap between stated priorities and concrete actions, especially by involving women's organizations and groups in programmes for capacity-building and empowerment.

19. The multi-donor evaluation commended UNICEF leadership in advocacy for the girl child and its achievements at regional and national levels in policy dialogue and programme development. It noted that moving from advocacy to concrete action depended on the understanding, among UNICEF staff, of the implications of structural gender inequalities. Sectoral programmes, it noted, have not given adequate attention to the multiple roles of women. The report argued that since women are the primary health care providers for their families and communities, recognition of the complexity of the roles of women in health care programmes was important. Women must be assisted in carrying out the responsibilities associated with their other roles, such as earning an income. The report recommended enhancing the capacities and skills for gender-responsive, intersectoral, cross-cutting programme development and a common understanding of the synergistic relationship between the advancement of women and the well-being of children. It emphasized the need for the evolution of the welfare-oriented income-generating projects (mostly in area-based programmes) to broad-based strategic initiatives for capacity-building and empowerment of women at the grass-roots level. The report recognized the special challenge for UNICEF in many instances where the national environment is not conducive to promoting social equity and empowerment of women.

20. Mainstreaming women's concerns in UNICEF programmes has been influenced in some instances by the varying levels of interest and individual commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women among UNICEF staff; inadequate accountability with regard to the integration of gender concerns; inadequate resources for planning and implementing programmes and widespread integration efforts for women; and insufficient understanding among some staff of the critical significance of strategic "status-related" interventions to the overall advancement of women. It recommends gender-analysis training to enhance capacities of staff and the development of clear, operational guidelines to facilitate the implementation of policy.

B. UNICEF response

21. UNICEF has attempted to address the recommendations of the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF. Increased attention has been given to the establishment of gender-sensitive monitoring systems to achieve the goals for children, with priority for the girl child. To encourage gender-responsive programme development, UNICEF has adapted the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework 2/ as an operational tool. The framework postulates that gender inequality exists at five levels, namely, welfare; access to resources; awareness-raising; participation in decision-making; and control over resources and developments in the social, economic and political spheres. Through systematic gender analysis of the problems and needs of children and women, the magnitude and severity of the disparities and inequalities can be assessed in terms of the above levels. Accordingly, it is possible to design appropriate programme responses to reduce the disparities and overcome the causes of inequalities in a dynamic manner. (See annex II for details of the framework.)

The framework has demonstrated its effectiveness in goal setting and strategy formulation for gender-responsive programmes; in accelerating the participation of women in such areas as health, education, water supply and sanitation; and in incorporating gender concerns in sustainable community-based social action for change.

22. A major thrust is directed towards building and enhancing the capacities of UNICEF staff through extensive training in gender analysis and in the application of the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework. To this end, a training package providing the theoretical and practical application of the Framework has been developed and tested. A global network of experts has been established to provide technical support to regional and country offices to strengthen capacity for gender-responsive and gender-sensitive programme development. During 1993 and early 1994, more than 650 UNICEF staff in regional and country offices received training in gender analysis. Special briefings were arranged for senior management. Technical support was provided to incorporate gender perspectives in the country programme preparation process on a selective basis. Further measures for strengthening actions and programmes for effective implementation of policy and achievement of the equality and empowerment of women and girls in the 1990s are indicated in the following chapters of the present report. In this regard, UNICEF views the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women as an opportunity to reinforce ongoing efforts to promote policies and programmes on gender equality and empowerment within the framework of the development of children and women.

IV. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

A. The need for new emphases

23. The conceptual basis and principles of action for girls and women emerge from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration of the World Summit for Children and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. UNICEF policy on women and girls has reflected these principles. As noted above, the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework provides a practical tool for work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The girl child

24. The life-cycle framework of analysis has led to greater integration of the needs of the young child in such programmes as health, nutrition and education. This focus on the young child needs to be maintained and strengthened. At the same time, it has become evident that the older girl (10 to 18 years of age), who is usually out of school in most countries of South Asia, Africa and Latin America, is vulnerable because of early marriage and early pregnancy. In addition, her health, nutrition and social support needs are neglected. A higher priority has to be given to advocacy for the special needs of adolescent girls and to integrated multisectoral programmes to meet those needs.

Gender and development approaches

25. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a shift towards wider recognition of the gender dimension in development strategies, as reflected in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and in Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This new perspective points to the need to identify ways to make development more equitable and sustainable for all sectors of society. As the preliminary version of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development states, "Gender is a fundamental organizing principle of human society and is a source for inequality. The concept refers to socially constructed relationships between men and women that are linked to the State, the economy and to all macro and micro processes and institutions. Policies that target women only cannot achieve the best results, nor can those which assume that public actions are gender-neutral in their effects. Hence, promoting gender equality implies a profound change in the socio-economic organization of societies: not only in the way women work, live and care for other members of their households, but also in the way men do, and in the way their respective roles in the family and community are articulated with the need to earn a living." 3/

26. The earlier women in development approach followed in development cooperation programmes (including those of UNICEF) made the social and economic contributions of women visible and identified women as a special target group for development services. It recognized their role and advocated the integration of the needs of women in mainstream development, particularly in access to resources for production and income generation. The "gender" approach builds on those concepts and principles and emphasizes that actions need to be directed to the fundamental structural causes that determine the status and role of men and women. It recommends that actions for change be introduced in an equitable and sustainable manner. It demands that policies and programmes reflect gender equality and empowerment as both the means and the goals of sustainable development.

27. As a result of the shift from the perspective of women in development to one of gender and development, UNICEF is now analysing the situation of women and girls in terms of the gender relationships that determine and perpetuate inequality. Such analysis will form the basis for programme formulation. It also calls for recognition of the diverse roles played by both men and women in child care and for greater attention to the parenting role of men. It implies that programmes should be directed at gender equality and empowerment of women to overcome underlying structural inequalities.

28. Increased attention to poverty alleviation in international and national development efforts is an important feature of the gender and development focus. Poverty is not gender-neutral. Economic recession, structural adjustment and high inflation continue to undermine the survival and well-being of women, who constitute the majority of the poor in most countries. Increasingly, women and adolescent girls are forced to work long hours in agriculture and subsistence food production for low wages. This is usually at the expense of their welfare, dignity and social status and suggests the need to promote selective activities for women.

Gender needs in emergency situations

29. There is growing evidence that there are gender differences in the severity and nature of impact of natural disasters, armed conflict and civil strife on men and women. Women and girls are more vulnerable as victims of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation. They also are compelled to assume total responsibility for the survival of their families and sometimes of their communities in the absence of males. The need for systematic responses to emergency situations that take gender into account is a priority for two major reasons. First, as the most affected group, women and children must be given opportunities to participate in decision-making and their special needs must be considered. Second, the incorporation of gender perspectives in the transition from relief assistance to development cooperation is crucial in the process of reconstruction, rehabilitation and development. Similarly, gender-conscious strategies and programmes are required for the special risk factors faced by women and girls in addressing the problems of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Legal status of women

30. In many countries, the low status of women is manifested in discriminatory and inequitable legislation, customary laws and practices. Such social barriers continue to curtail the equal participation of women in the control of community resources and entitlements. During the 1980s, new opportunities emerged for the review and revision of national legislation through the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were also important in advocacy and consciousness-raising. These international instruments provided a framework for the equal participation of women in the emerging democratization and decentralization processes of the 1990s. On another plane, the groundwork was laid to analyse the existing role and responsibilities of men and women within the family and community and to promote more equitable social and economic relationships at all levels.

B. Major priorities

31. On the whole, UNICEF activities will continue to focus on the three approaches of mainstreaming of gender concerns in development, special attention to the girl child and specific women-centred activities.

32. The central importance of overcoming gender bias in the achievement of goals for children and women has been discussed in paragraphs 9 to 11 above. In this regard, UNICEF needs to:

(a) Ensure attention to gender disparities in the achievement of all the goals of the Declaration of the World Summit for Children as they are reflected in national programmes of action and UNICEF country programmes;

(b) Ensure special attention to the achievement and sustainability of the supporting goals of the Declaration, which directly and indirectly affect the situation of women and girls;

(c) Ensure that all country programmes of cooperation submitted to the Executive Board include explicitly targeted initiatives focusing on the needs of the girl child at every stage of development and on promoting gender equality and empowerment;

(d) Strengthen the UNICEF response to gender needs in programme activities in emergency situations, with particular attention to protecting women and girls against violence;

(e) Ensure that UNICEF policy and programme documents, guidelines and training packages reflect adequately the above objectives.

33. UNICEF programmes must also:

(a) Advocate the universal ratification by 1995 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the acceleration of the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(b) Promote the participation of NGOs in advocacy of and programmes for the advancement of women and girls and build alliances with all organizations, groups and entities, such as women's organizations, local leaders, parliamentarians, professional organizations, cultural groups, religious bodies and the media, that share UNICEF priority concerns.

C. Programme elements

Mainstreaming gender concerns

34. Gender analysis will be the basis for mainstreaming gender concerns in UNICEF programmes and activities to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children. The Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework will be applied as the operational tool for assessing the nature and magnitude of discrimination and disparity and the level of empowerment of women at every step of the UNICEF country programme process. (See annex II for details on the Framework.) Mainstreaming will include integration of women in such programmes as health, nutrition, education and water supply and environmental sanitation and in the promotion of the empowerment of women for effective participation in community-based programmes for sustainable social action.

Advocacy and actions for the girl child

35. Today's girl child is tomorrow's woman. Unique opportunities have been created in this decade for action in favour of disadvantaged girl children and women with the ratification by over 154 countries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the formulation of national programmes of action in about 100 developing countries. Strategies and actions to eliminate and reduce disparities in the life cycle of the girl will need to be strengthened in the

sectors of health, nutrition, education, water supply and sanitation, and linkages should be established with the intersectoral programmes of area-based projects, as noted in paragraph 24 above. Holistic and integrated approaches will include actions targeted specifically at the girl child as well as national, regional and international advocacy of appropriate policies and legislation. Efforts to mobilize attitudinal and behavioural change, especially in such critical areas as early marriage, female genital mutilation, teenage pregnancy and female infanticide, will be intensified through support to local and national groups and organizations.

Women-centred activities

36. While integration of gender concerns in programmes will remain a major thrust, specific activities will need to be targeted at women in poverty and women and girls in especially difficult circumstances. For example, promotion of local banking services for women will enhance their access to credit for agricultural or entrepreneurial activities. In the medium term, special support may be needed for projects to improve the legal status of women, collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data, conduct policy-oriented research and special studies, build capacity of women's organizations, and provide child-care facilities for working mothers. Similarly, specific programmes will be necessary to meet the needs of women and girls in emergency situations of armed conflict, civil strife and environmental disasters, those who are victims of domestic violence, and destitute women and girls living in urban slums and environmentally degraded areas.

Gender-equity in the family and community

37. For the most part, behaviour, attitudes and values regarding gender are learned and perpetuated within the family. Recent studies on changing family patterns indicate that growing numbers of children are not benefiting from the resources of their fathers, to which they are entitled, and mothers must take full responsibility and carry the burden. Past UNICEF policies and programmes have not paid adequate attention to the role of fathers in sharing family responsibilities and child rearing. Therefore, to be gender-responsive, there is a need for special programme thrusts directed at promoting equity within the family and strengthening the parenting role of men.

38. At the community level, the role of women as decision makers in community management should be strengthened in the emerging community-based structures. Efforts must be made to eliminate gender stereotyping, thus promoting equal opportunities for women and men to achieve their full potential. The opportunities created by the democratization process in many countries should be seized to enable women to exercise their political rights and to assume leadership positions.

39. The mobilization of youth will help to overcome traditional barriers of structural gender inequalities by harnessing their energy, fervour and desire for social change. The involvement of both young men and women in changing gender-stereotyped roles and in their increasing acceptance of more responsible sexual roles has been crucial in campaigns to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. UNICEF is keenly interested in the youth initiative connected with the

Fourth World Conference on Women, aptly titled "Voices for Change". This initiative will reach equal numbers of young men and women and encourage them to identify crucial gender issues for consideration at the Conference and beyond, in the twenty-first century. It provides UNICEF with a unique opportunity to introduce change in inter-generational concepts of gender, thereby leading to a more equitable society.

D. Areas of priority action: a summary

40. In summary, the following emerge as important areas for continued action at all levels in the achievement of the above priorities:

(a) Review, in each country, of existing policies and strategies, including legal instruments, taking into account cultural obstacles and underlying structural inequalities;

(b) Support for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive national policies and programmes in furthering the aims of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(c) Advocacy and actions for the girl child;

(d) Collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data and establishment of appropriate monitoring systems;

(e) Development of relevant indicators for assessment of the gender-responsiveness of programmes in line with the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework;

(f) Building of capacities for gender analysis at several levels through training and sensitization;

(g) Advocacy and social mobilization for innovative policies and gender-sensitive legal provisions and administrative practices;

(h) Provision of opportunities for mobilization and organized participation of women at community, local and national levels through improved access of women and girls to information, education and communication;

(i) Building of alliances among government agencies, NGOs, women leaders, social activist groups and others to create a positive environment for the effective participation of women in the emerging democratization and decentralization process in many countries.

V. RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COORDINATION

41. Mainstreaming of gender concerns in UNICEF programmes will be made possible through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms at all levels. Reviews of annual and other reports from the field will be expanded and technical support will be strengthened in the programme preparation process.

42. Capacity-building efforts will be strengthened to train UNICEF staff and their counterparts. It is proposed that 80 per cent of all UNICEF professional staff be trained in gender analysis and in the application of the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework by 1995. This will enhance the gender-analysis skills of staff members and help to create and promote a gender-sensitive work environment.

43. While the responsibility and accountability for policy implementation will rest with the UNICEF representative in the country office, the integration of gender and development in UNICEF programmes will be the responsibility of all professional staff. To support the integration of gender perspectives in programmes, a focal point will be designated in each office to assist in this task. The staff member designated as focal point will provide technical support to programme preparation and be responsible for advocacy and programme actions related to gender needs and concerns. Similarly, the regional adviser (gender and development), or a designated senior staff member in regional offices, will provide technical support to the country offices, as required.

44. At headquarters, the Director of the Programme Division has overall responsibility for ensuring policy implementation and accelerating the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women. The various sections of the Programme Division will share the responsibility for the integration of gender concerns in their sectoral programmes. The Gender and Development Section will continue its lead role in policy formulation, strategy development and monitoring of policy implementation. In the medium term, it will continue to support capacity-building efforts. The Section has a direct working relationship with the gender and development focal points of other United Nations agencies and with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat. It will serve as the focal point within UNICEF for the preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

45. It will be necessary to strengthen mechanisms to ensure accountability of individual staff members in the achievement of gender-related goals. The following measures are suggested to enhance existing mechanisms:

(a) Gender awareness should be adopted as a criterion, inter alia, in the appointment and promotion of staff and in the selection of consultants;

(b) The assessment of the staff member's performance related to the integration of gender concerns should be included as part of the guidelines of the annual performance evaluation report of all professional staff;

(c) UNICEF will strengthen further its efforts to promote gender sensitivity in the workplace by offering appropriate training and by creating a conducive environment. Efforts will continue to promote gender-sensitive

behaviour of all staff; create equal opportunities for women staff and eliminate gender-stereotyping in assignments; and facilitate "family-friendly" provisions of child care for male and female staff.

46. Institutional mechanisms and resources for the coordination and monitoring of policy implementation will be established and strengthened at all levels, as needed. The mechanism for this purpose will be a steering committee or a task force at UNICEF offices and in the Programme Division at headquarters. Within the overall policy of keeping down the number of headquarters staff, consideration must be given to strengthening the capacities and resources of UNICEF, commensurate with the scope and magnitude of the challenges.

47. UNICEF will continue to coordinate and collaborate with other United Nations agencies, donor agencies, NGOs and women and youth organizations by:

(a) Assuming leadership for advocacy, fund-raising and programme development in relation to the girl child, youth and gender perspective in the context of the goals of the World Summit for Children. UNICEF will support and participate in special task forces or working groups of the organizations concerned and will remain active in such inter-agency forums as the Joint Consultative Group on Policies and the UNICEF/World Health Organization Joint Committee on Health Policy. Further, the priorities of gender equality and the empowerment of women will be central to UNICEF inputs to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and the 1994 International Year of the Family;

(b) Establishing and strengthening collaboration with other interested agencies in developing a set of social and economic indicators to assess progress in the equality and empowerment of women.

VI. UNICEF CONTRIBUTION TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

48. The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace provides a unique opportunity for advocacy and action to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, the goals of the World Summit for Children and universal ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNICEF will play an active role in global, regional and national preparations for the Conference.

49. A major outcome of the Conference is expected to be the adoption of a platform of action that will identify specific goals and strategies in the key areas affecting the advancement of women. This provides a concrete opportunity to connect the goals for children and women with the mobilization of international commitment to those goals.

50. The main thrust of UNICEF support will be collaborative efforts with international and national agencies and focal points in United Nations and government agencies and NGOs in furthering the above objectives. An ad hoc inter-agency committee has been formed with the Secretary-General of the

Conference as chairperson. Participation in this committee and in other forums allows UNICEF to coordinate its activities and support with those of the Conference secretariat and other United Nations agencies. At regional and country levels, UNICEF supports preparatory activities in collaboration with United Nations regional commissions and other United Nations agencies. It is anticipated that UNICEF, at the invitation of Governments, will be a member of national steering committees designated to plan and undertake the preparatory activities for the Conference and will play an active role in the inter-agency committees. The following activities have been identified as main areas of cooperation in the preparatory process:

(a) At headquarters: UNICEF has agreed to assign a senior UNICEF staff member to the Conference secretariat. An internal task force has been formed to coordinate UNICEF support to the Conference. An executive directive has been issued to field offices on UNICEF commitment to the Conference, recommending areas for action at regional and national levels, such as special meetings and events for advocacy of UNICEF concerns, in collaboration with international NGOs, women's organizations and youth organizations. At headquarters, documentation and the production of publications and other materials will be undertaken, as required;

(b) At the regional level: UNICEF will collaborate with the United Nations regional commissions in the formulation of the agenda of the regional expert group meetings. It will support working groups, NGO planning committees, preparatory conferences, NGO forums and youth forums. In the course of this collaboration, UNICEF will provide inputs for the agenda, support documentation, sponsor representatives from countries of the region and facilitate media support for these events. It will promote regional networks for the Conference and involve such organizations as the African Women Development and Communication Network in Africa, the Network of Parliamentarians in Latin America and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, an organization promoting the advancement of women in the South;

(c) At the country level: UNICEF will participate directly in national steering committees, have dialogues with the national focal points in government and non-governmental sectors and participate in inter-agency coordinating committees. It will support the formulation of the platform of action and the establishment of NGO and youth networks. This will include analysis of the situation of women and girls, policy reviews and preparation of background information in connection with the formulation of the country paper and the platform of action;

(d) Simultaneously, UNICEF will promote the mobilization of public support, starting with grass-roots women's organizations, youth organizations and local organizations for wider discussion, understanding and articulation of critical issues within the country and at the Conference. It will advocate the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, drawing on its complementarity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Policies regarding the girl child will be a special focus for advocacy and support. Activities will generate awareness and interest in the communication media about gender issues and national and international activities related to the Conference. An important area of support will be

documentation of successful experiences and publication and dissemination of information through the women's network and at the Conference.

Notes

1/ Evaluation of UNICEF, Sector report on Women in Development and Community Participation, Working Paper, December 1992.

2/ Sara H. Longwe, 1991 "Gender Awareness: the Missing Element in the Third World Development Project", Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development (Oxford: Oxfam), 1991.

3/ A/48/70-E/1993/16.

Annex I

GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s AND GENDER EQUALITY

1. The achievement of the seven major goals adopted at the World Summit for Children will require specific attention to the situation of women and girls and to the achievement of gender equality. The goals of halving the maternal mortality rate (MMR) and reducing the adult illiteracy rate have specific references to women. The universal scope of the major goals listed below and the widespread gender imbalance in respect of these goals make a strong gender perspective critical to the success of the efforts to achieve the following:

(a) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of the infant mortality rate and the under-five mortality rate by one third, or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births, respectively, whichever is less;

(b) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of MMR by one half;

(c) Between 1990 and the year 2000, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five years of age by one half;

(d) Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

(e) By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary-school-age children;

(f) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age-group to be determined in each country) to at least one half of its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy;

(g) Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

2. Among the 26 supporting goals, the following directly and explicitly relate to improving the status of girls and women:

(a) Special attention to the health and nutrition of the female child and to pregnant and lactating women;

(b) Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too numerous;

(c) Access by all pregnant women to prenatal care, trained attendants during childbirth and referral facilities for high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies;

(d) Universal access to primary education, with special emphasis on girls and on accelerated literacy programmes for women;

(e) Reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one third of the 1990 levels;

(f) Empowerment of all women to breast-feed their children exclusively for four to six months and to continue breast-feeding, with complementary food, well into the second year;

(g) Maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage (at least 90 per cent of children under one year of age by the year 2000) against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis, and against tetanus for women of child-bearing age;

(h) Universal access to basic education and achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary-school-age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls;

(i) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (with appropriate age-group to be determined in each country) to at least one half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy.

Annex II

THE WOMEN'S EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK: A DYNAMIC TOOL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

1. The Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework has been identified by the Gender and Development Section as a dynamic and creative tool to be used in its efforts to mainstream and integrate gender concerns throughout the UNICEF programming process. The framework emphasizes gender-responsive assessment, evaluation and programming.

2. The Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework argues that women's development can be viewed in terms of five levels of equality, of which empowerment is an essential element at each level. The levels are: welfare; access; awareness-raising; participation; and control.

3. The first level, welfare, addresses only the basic needs of women, without recognizing or attempting to solve the underlying structural causes, which necessitate provision of welfare services. At this point, women are merely passive beneficiaries of welfare benefits.

4. The second level, access, is essential for women to make meaningful progress. This involves equality of access to such resources as educational opportunities, land and credit. The path to empowerment is initiated when women recognize lack of access to resources as a barrier to their growth and overall well-being and take action to redress this.

5. The third level, awareness-raising, is a crucial point in the Framework. For women to take appropriate action to close gender gaps or gender inequalities, there must be recognition that their problems stem from inherent structural and institutional discrimination. They must also recognize the role that they can and often do play in reinforcing the system that restricts their growth.

6. The fourth level, participation, is the point where women take decisions equally, alongside men. To reach this level, however, mobilization is necessary. By organizing themselves and working collectively, women will be empowered to gain increased representation, which will lead to increased empowerment and ultimately greater control.

7. Control is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. Here, there is a balance of power between men and women and neither party has dominance. At this level in the Framework, women are able to make decisions regarding their lives and the lives of their children and to play an active role in the development process. Further, the contributions of women are fully recognized and rewarded.

8. Using the Framework, development planners can determine whether a project or programme is at the welfare, access, awareness-raising, participation or control level to move women to higher levels of equality and empowerment. Currently, most project/programme profiles "fade away", i.e., gender issues are

stated as intentions but recede during implementation. As a result, projects/programmes continue to remain at the welfare or access level.

9. A training package has been produced, based on concepts of the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework, which is designed to meet the specific needs of UNICEF programme staff and the UNICEF programme cycle.